

# MAIN DILEMMAS OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

It comes with some satisfaction that nowadays, in 2007, it is almost common practice that the term “management sciences” is used, first of all one should feel satisfaction about the fact that this name is to be found in the official classification of sciences. It was relatively not so long ago that one talked about “the teaching of organisation and management” without noticing any logical fallacy in it – everybody, or almost everybody, follow Fayol in saying that organising is one of the functions of management. At the beginning of the process of the Polish political transformation, being the first by choice to preside the Committee of Organisation and Management Sciences at PAS I suggested to adopt the term “management” instead of “organisation and management”. This suggestion was not welcome with enthusiasm then. Its opponents adduced the Polish tradition which advocates the name “organisation and management”. I hope that the present correction of the name will have a lasting character. The remains of the old terminology in the names of some of the chairs and institutes, PAS committee, TNOiK (Scientific Society for Organisation and Management) as well as periodicals names may be presumed as a relic of the history of our sciences, just like “economy of industry”, “economy of an enterprise” or “economy of circulation”. It is good that we are talking about management sciences using the plural. It emphasises the multitude of sources and currents in those sciences and its current substantial internal differentiation.

Modern management sciences are – to put it figuratively – like the Vistula river which many other smaller rivers, brooks and streams flow their waters into. In the wide bed of its waters at its estuary in the Baltic there are waters of its many tributaries: the rapid Dunajec, a bit calmer San, even lazier Bug and the Narew. Management sciences have adopted and are still adopting many elements from other sciences which, however, do not lose their identity.

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\* **Professor PhD h.c. Stanisław Sudół**, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Manager College in Warszawa.

I consider management as science whose output is socially useful knowledge in the form of regularities in economic or social activity or theories which explain a particular area of reality and/or – by providing designs for application – help to rationalise this reality. Economic development or – in a wider context – civilisation's development increases the demand for the products of those sciences because as a result of the occurrence of many circumstances (which may be in short described as the increase of the complexity of the world) management becomes more and more difficult. The experience of the most gifted managers alone is not enough nowadays. Management has now become one of the most important elements of development. It would be difficult for anyone to call this fact into question.

However, management is also a practical activity, i.e. a conscious and purposeful human activity whose aim is to improve the present economic and social reality. Beside the knowledge gained on the basis of generalising on many case studies – the completion of those actions in specific situations requires definite rules and methods as well as the ability to undertake management enterprises by big and small teams of people. In practice certain management rules have been applied since the beginning of time, since the onset of the first complex team efforts. It can be easily said that the seven wonders of the ancient world and the Great Wall of China or the amazing Mayan and Aztec constructions would not have been erected if it had not been for the skill of management. Great masses of people took part in their creation and substantial material resources, technology being at a very low level, were used. Management is perceived as some kind of art, understood as ability, mastery resulting from talent, intuition, knowledge and practical experience. Ross A. Webber<sup>1</sup> writes that knowledge (science) without ability (art) is useless, and even dangerous, whereas ability (art) without knowledge (science) means stagnation and inability to pass achievements onto others.

Management sciences are – according to *communis opinio doctorum* – very young sciences, not only in relation to exact sciences and natural sciences but also in comparison to most other social sciences, with all the consequences. It is almost a hundredth anniversary of these sciences<sup>2</sup> now, which in comparison with many scientific disciplines is a very short period<sup>3</sup> of time. It is because of the young age of management sciences that many even basic categories, notions and regularities have still a “soft” character – they have different formulations and there are many elements not proven by scientific methods, untested statements or even ones which are impossible to be tested. There is too much subjectivity. It is very easy to construct “new management

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Webber, *Zasady zarządzania organizacjami*, PWE, Warszawa 1984, p.14.

<sup>2</sup> The year 1903 is considered as the date of the birth of management sciences. It is then that F.W. Taylor's elaboration *Shop Management* was published.

<sup>3</sup> I do not think it wrong to associate the beginning of management sciences with the works of the classics of scientific organisation of work and management – as Ała Leszczyńska writes in her likeable article (*Ponownie kilka słów o zarządzaniu*, “Przegląd Organizacji” 2006, No 7–8), who sees the beginning of those sciences in old eras, because it was already then that organisational and managerial actions were undertaken and described. However actions and their descriptions alone, without theoretical reflection, are not science yet.

theories”, which lack in satisfactory verification, so they can be treated as hypotheses at best. The essential mediocrity of elaborations is often camouflaged by sophisticated vocabulary and pretentious scientific jargon. Also, one cannot but notice the appearance of fashions to deal with certain problems. This situation was most dramatically described by Harold Koontz in 1961 and then after twenty years in 1980 when he spoke of the jungle of the organisation theory<sup>4</sup>. And in 2000 it was described in a rather ridiculing manner by popular journalists from “The Economist” John Micklethwait i Adrian Wooldridge<sup>5</sup>. It is necessary then to continually raise the scientific standards (rigours) of management sciences, both in the accumulation of knowledge and in research methods. It is the scientific circles themselves that should take care of that. Nobody will do it for them. That situation does not concern only Poland.

The level of exactness, certainty, scope (universality) and durability of statements (rules) in management sciences (similarly to other social sciences)<sup>6</sup> is lower than in exact and natural sciences, which results not only from the fact that they are so young but also from their nature and history (this science was not started by scientists but by practitioners). This may be expressed as below.

1. Objects of management research are not changeless in time. Quite the contrary, they transform with time and because of changes of conditions. Hence the statements concerning management are less durable, get older faster, become outdated. As a result the scope of applicability of the solutions to certain problems as recommended by management sciences is limited in time.
2. Nowadays those objects differ to a large extent depending on the level of technological and socioeconomic development. Consequently, the scope (reach, universality) and validity of scientific statements in this discipline is smaller<sup>7</sup>.
3. As opposed to exact and natural sciences, where quantitative problems prevail, in management research to a large extent qualitative factors have to be taken into account. This results from the fact that in management processes one deals with attitudes of humans, who are driven not only by rational considerations but also by emotions, which are difficult to measure<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> H. Koontz, *The management theory jungle*, “Journal of the Academy of Management” 1961, vol. 4, No. 1, *The management theory jungle revisited*, “Academy of Management Review” 1980, No. 2.

<sup>5</sup> J. Micklethwait, A. Wooldridge, *Szamani zarządzania*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i Spółka, Poznań 2000. In the final part of the book, Conclusions. Immature discipline, they wrote: “management theory reminds the proverbial dog’s breakfast. Renown professors’ books stand on bookshelves cover to cover with publications by dubious quack doctors” (p. 261).

<sup>6</sup> A. Grobler asserts that “social regulations lack in the universality which characterises the natural order. They are in force only in certain social conditions” (A. Grobler, *Metodologia nauk*, Wyd. Aureus – Wyd. Znak, Kraków 2006, p. 230).

<sup>7</sup> H. Witczak points to the lesser durability and universality of management sciences statements, *Naukowy status nauki o zarządzaniu*, in: *Nowoczesne zarządzanie. Koncepcje i instrumenty*, collective work coordinated by M. Trocki i S. Gregorczyk, SGH, Warszawa 2006, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> I took it from Jadwiga Majchrzak that the scope of qualitative factors included in research distinguishes management sciences from natural sciences (*Techniki badawcze w pracach doktorskich z zakresu zarządzania*,

4. A factor which to a great degree diversifies objects of management sciences, as well as the criteria for the assessment of their statements, is the cultural dissimilarity of nations and societies which follow different values. This circumstance also limits their universality<sup>9</sup>.
5. Certain conceptions and management methods are differently assessed by people depending on the historical period. Take the change of assessments concerning management style and charismatic leadership as an example.
6. Management styles and statements of management sciences used in practice are influenced by socioeconomic ideologies. A meaningful example is the problem of employee participation in management<sup>10</sup>.
7. Statements of the sciences in question are verifiable on the basis of repetitive experiments in a very limited manner.
8. Management sciences, as belonging to applied sciences<sup>11</sup>, do not only aim to interpret the differentiated and changeable reality (diagnostic function) but also, and perhaps above all, to shape it, to formulate instructions for practice (projection function)<sup>12</sup>. To a large extent it gives them a normative character<sup>13</sup>.

in: *Podstawy metodologiczne prac doktorskich w naukach ekonomicznych*, academic editor Maria Sławińska, A.E. Poznań 2006, p. 67). Also Stanisław Kaczmarczyk called my attention to this circumstance.

<sup>9</sup> S. Chępa points out that the limited validity (adequacy to reality) of management sciences results to a large degree from the fact that those sciences are developed mainly in the area of the western civilisation (regardless of its certain differentiation) and therefore those statements are not adequate in other civilisation (S. Chępa, *Metodologia nauk o zarządzaniu – problemy dyskusyjne*, in: *Nowoczesne zarządzanie. Koncepcje i instrumenty*,..... p. 46).

<sup>10</sup> W. Morawski, *Socjologia organizacji w Polsce – perspektywy badawcze*, „Organizacja i Kierowanie” 1976, No 3/5/ i P. Płoszajski, *Spółeczna odpowiedzialność uczonego: między utopią wolności a niemoralnością służebności*, in: *Wolność a służebność nauki*, red. Z. Kowalewski, Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, Warszawa 1991, pp. 76–77, point out that the relation between social sciences and ideologies is a highly complex and delicate problem – complete separation of those two disciplines is disadvantageous and so is bringing them together too closely.

<sup>11</sup> Unlike most authors J. Kurnal puts organisation and management theory among theoretical sciences, not the applied ones (J. Kurnal, *Zarys teorii organizacji i zarządzania*, PWE, Warszawa 1970, p. 96–97).

<sup>12</sup> M. Przybyła writes: “Just like any other science, management theory has three important functions. They are:

- the descriptive function, it aims to describe the examined object, problem, phenomenon or events in as much detail as possible. Through the realisation of this function answers to the following questions are sought: what is what? what kind is it? what depends on what? It is the first step in the exploration of the examined phenomenon.
- the explicative function whose aim is to adduce motifs, reasons for the occurrence of the examined phenomena, explaining them and interpreting them. This function aims then to find the reply to the question: why is it so?
- the predictive function aims to define anticipated situations. This function aims to answer the question: how should it be?

*Organizacja i zarządzanie. Podstawy wiedzy menedżerskiej*, Edited by Mieczysław Przybyła, Wyd. AE Wrocław 2001, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> H. Witczak points out rightly that in management “the normative element, decision element (the way it should be) dominates the cognitive element (the way it is). (H. Witczak, *Naukowy status nauki o zarządzaniu*, in: *Nowoczesne zarządzanie*,..... collective work edited by M. Trocki i S. Gregorczyk, op.cit.

9. Management sciences statements are assessed to a lesser degree on the basis of their relation to reality. It is their utility that attracts a greater degree of attention<sup>14</sup>. This means that verification of management sciences statements is achieved through their utilisation (practical implementation).

It is due to the fact that the main function of management sciences, as belonging to applied, practical sciences, is the projection function, i.e. formulation of recommendations on how to improve the management process, that a question arises: can they also fulfil the cognitive function, analogically to the exact and natural sciences. Information technology professor Wojciech Cellary presents a strongly negative position on this matter. He stated that "it is a methodological error in the field of management sciences to seek cognitive results. In the field of management sciences there are no laws ruling reality because reality remains to be constructed. There exist methods of reality construction"<sup>15</sup>.

The above position is extreme and unilateral. In order to be able to suggest improvement in management those sciences have to describe the existing management processes, differentiate their kinds and types as well as examine the factors that influence them<sup>16</sup>. Whether an organisation is managed in one way or another depends on many factors: the level of the socioeconomic development of the country, the political, social and economic system in the country, the foreign relations of the country and its organisation units, the level of education, culture and mentality of the population, historical experiences of the whole country or its regions and many other circumstances. One cannot say that particular management solutions are exclusively attributed to the managers who freely, or even arbitrarily, implement certain type of management without taking all these circumstances into consideration. Management is part of social reality and it reflects many social factors where certain regularities are present, which can be and should be examined, as is done by sociologists, social psychologists and political scientists<sup>17</sup>.

p. 23). The expectation of economic practice that management sciences advise it on how to act is particularly visible in the modern strategic management. Unfortunately these expectations are not met satisfactorily, which may lead to the formulation of negative opinions about the condition of management sciences, see e.g. E.H. Bowman, H. Singh, H. Thomas, *The Domain of Strategic Management. History and Evolution*, in: *Handbook of Strategy and Management*, ed. A. Pettigrew, H. Thomas, R. Wittington, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2002, pp. 31–51.

<sup>14</sup> G. Jokiel calls that to attention (*O celach nauki organizacji i zarządzania*, in: *Nowe kierunki w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem – celowość, skuteczność, efektywność*, ed. H. Jagoda i J. Lichtarski, Wyd. AE, Wrocław 2006, p. 57).

<sup>15</sup> W. Cellary, *Metodologia nauk o zarządzaniu z perspektywy inżyniera*, in: *Podstawy metodologiczne prac doktorskich w naukach ekonomicznych*, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> A. Podgórecki writes, "practical sciences (management sciences being part of them – S.S.) are characterised by such stages as: description of the present state of the matters and its assessment, description and assessment of the intended results, description and assessment of the suggested schemes, assessment of economic adequacy of the change of the present state of the matters at the price of the scheme, description and assessment of the realised results" (A. Podgórecki, *Charakterystyka nauk praktycznych*, PWN, Warszawa 1962, p. 125).

<sup>17</sup> P. Banaszyk, by including management sciences in designing sciences, ones which solve construction problems, points out that the formulation of construction and design solutions has to be forestalled by

Hereby I would like to challenge the commonly accepted clear (strict) division of sciences into theoretical and practical (applied) ones. The function of the former would be to recognise (to acquire) the truth, making it possible to understand the existing reality (cognitive function), the latter would only create foundations for rational activity, construct rules and procedures allowing for alteration (improvement) of reality (pragmatic and projection function)<sup>18</sup>. Admittedly, in some sciences it is the cognitive function that dominates and in other it is the projection function but it is probably in all the scientific fields and disciplines that those two functions are inseparable. Moreover, the resources of theoretical scientific science are processed into the resources of practical knowledge, thus leading to its practical application. For example, the main aim of medicine is to provide pharmacological and surgical treatment as well as to alleviate pain but in order for it to be able to do those tasks it must conduct thorough examinations of the human organism and of the factors influencing its condition<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, if we take technical sciences – then in order for them to be able to give instruction on how to build houses, bridges, machines and computers, they cannot only rely on research of other sciences such as physics, chemistry or biology but they must do their own engineering research on statistics, material endurance and production processes. A third example, sociology recommends practical rules of cohabitation on the basis of the rules of social life that it has recognised.

A rebellious suspicion emerges then that the division of sciences into theoretical ones and practical (applied) ones is nowadays an anachronism<sup>20</sup>.

Practical considerations (the layer of practical knowledge) dominate in management sciences. They aim to construct recommendations and practical directives on how to make management better and more rational, which brings appropriate social gains. However, they must also include theoretical considerations (the layer of theoretical knowledge)<sup>21</sup>, which concern the general conditions and rules of implemen-

a broader recognition of reality (P. Banaszyk, *Podejście do zarządzania strategicznego a wymagania naukowości badań strategii biznesowych*, in: *Koncepcje i narzędzia zarządzania strategicznego*, collective work edited by M. Romanowska i P. Wachowiak, SGH, Warszawa 2006, p. 18).

<sup>18</sup> Practical science – according to T. Kotarbiński – is the kind of science which mainly involves projection. (T. Kotarbiński, *Elementy teorii poznania, logiki formalnej i metodologii nauk*, wyd. II, Wrocław 1961, pp. 447–448).

<sup>19</sup> K. Krzeczowski wrote on this matter: “it was as early as a century ago that surgery was only art, craft, guild, it had nothing to do with medicine; yet today it is the most exquisite expression of modern medicine and it does not lose anything of its practical character” (K. Krzeczowski, *O stanowisko nauk praktycznych*, in: *Polityka społeczna. Wybór pism*, Polski Instytut Służby Społecznej, Łódź 1947, p. 31).

<sup>20</sup> This suspicion is further confirmed by M. Grabski’s statement: “...the mutual influences among the branches of basic and applied sciences and technics, which not so long ago were quite distant from one another, are now so strong that they cannot be set apart or differentiated – they are part of one coherent whole, and one cannot evolve without the other. It is in many fields that differentiating between basic and applied research is an artificial construction” (M. Grabski, *Między rządem i nauką – źródła konfliktu*, „Nauka” 2006, No 4, p. 31).

<sup>21</sup> “Management science... is a cognitive activity to the same extent as it is a pragmatic one” (Ł. Sułkowski, *Epistemologia w naukach o zarządzaniu*, PWE, Warszawa 2005, p. 18).

tation of all management functions. Without such a theoretical foundation, without learning about the very complex economic, social, natural and technical reality in which organisations function all the designs proposed by those sciences would not use the previous experience in management (such experience requires order and assessment, which means it has a cognitive character) and they would err with voluntarism. Without theoretical knowledge practical knowledge would be very shallow and superficial<sup>22</sup>.

It seems appropriate to make a closer analysis of the very complex problem that a relation of scientific activity, aiming at increasing knowledge, to practical activity (practice) is. W. Pytkowski's statement<sup>23</sup> that for science theory has a triple significance – fertilising, screening and verifying – is accepted here without question. If we do take into consideration the needs of practice then we have to punctuate several circumstances stated below.

- The relation between theory and practice is inseparable. "...as a matter of fact theory stems from practice. Practice confronts theory with questions but on the other hand, theory requires from practice to be implemented in real life"<sup>24</sup>. No science, whether it be theoretical one or practical one, can replace practice. Practice without science would have to rely only on the method of trial and error.
- There is, at least in a shorter perspective, a discrepancy between the aims of science and practice: the main aim of science is to describe reality, while practice is focused on utilitarian aims. Science seeks objective laws in a given area of reality while practice expects effective instruction and formulas on how to solve specific problems.
- Scientific research ought to deal with problems which are rudimental to a given area of practical life, and avoid "trifles" casually brought up by practice. It is right to point out that almost always it leads to impoverishment of science and it undermines the position and authority of scientists<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Let me refer to J. Trzcieniecki here: Sciences whose development continually oscillates between theory and practice are prone to lose their status of being a science as a result of too much focus on the area of practical implementation. Such a science turns into a set of separate detailed regulations of a limited applicability, it falls into pieces which are more and more specialised and complex. Division of knowledge and lack of theoretical generalisations lead to complete atrophy – reduction to a collection of techniques whose applicability is limited (J. Trzcieniecki, *Wykład doktoranta: nauka organizacji i zarządzania – garść refleksji*, „Organizacja i Kierowanie” 2005, No 3).

<sup>23</sup> W. Pytkowski, *Organizacja badań i ocena prac naukowych*, PWN, Warszawa 1981, p. 25. Inseparability of management sciences and practice is expressed in Ł. Sułkowski's statement which says that "a certain commune of researchers and practitioners which has the possibility to derive from many discourses" has come into being in those sciences (Ł. Sułkowski, *Perspektywa interpretatywna w naukach o zarządzaniu*, in: *Nowe kierunki w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem – celowość, skuteczność, efektywność*, wyd. cyt. p. 140).

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 24.

- Research undertaken in applied sciences should be aimed at creative solutions of problems which will have some significance in a less or more distant future. Focus of research on present day needs only is shortsightedness which contributes neither to science nor to practice. Among other things it leads to hastiness in research and hurrying researchers by practice. Besides, because research is not conducted early enough in relation to the deadline, when its results are needed, it is often out of date and inadequate for practice.
- Research in management is influenced by the actual condition of management practice. Progress in this practice enhances research while its low level hampers it. This influence can be seen in the fact that the level of management sciences is the highest in the countries with highly developed economies, especially in the USA. One can even talk about americanisation of management sciences.
- In the area of relations between science and practice important is the scope, the method and the form of delivery of the results to practice. Descriptive and explanatory statements of management sciences, in order for them to be useful in practice, have to be translated into understandable and clear practical directives. When formulating those directives, apart from scientific research results, practical experience of people who have a real influence on particular elements of management, especially managers, should be taken into consideration. A direct advisory participation of researchers is also essential when implementing research results<sup>26</sup>.
- One can probably acknowledge A.K. Koźmiński's<sup>27</sup> opinion that nowadays, when immaterial goods (knowledge, talent, name, reputation) and the phenomenon called "intellectualisation of management" are becoming the basic development factor, science is closer to economic practice than it used to be.

I am fond of J. Zieleniewski's<sup>28</sup> opinion about a blurred boundary, in some cases, between scientific research and activities of a practical character, that "many not routinised engineering tasks have all the basic characteristics of scientific activity". In particular it concerns the participation in implementation of research results in practice. J. Zieleniewski speaks of engineering tasks but it can also be easily referred to activities concerned with implementation of ideas in the field of management.

An analysis of these circumstances confirms the belief that science separated from practice would only be art for art's sake. However, a practician who does not have backing in a scientific outlook on the nature of reality is helpless in the face of ever

<sup>26</sup> One of the reasons for the necessity of researchers' consultation when using (implementing) research results can be inferred from the following situation described by P. Płoszajski (op. cit., p. 232): "Scientists simplify problems to make it possible to examine them because certain aspects of the problems transgress the area the scientists are involved in, the accepted theories or current interests. On the other hand, practicians are forced to deal with problems in their full multipronged complexity".

<sup>27</sup> A.K. Koźmiński, *Tradycyjna antynomia nauki i zarządzania*, „Nauka” 2000, No 1, pp. 63–65.

<sup>28</sup> J. Zieleniewski, *O organizacji badań naukowych*, PWE, Warszawa 1975, pp. 50–51.



changing conditions. It must be added that the above facts relate to management sciences to a serious or even great extent. And it has to be stated that those facts often escape the attention of those who articulate subordinate role of science in relation to the needs of practice.

It is sometimes posited that management sciences theories should have a practical character. A practical theory posit is in fact preposterous<sup>29</sup>. Theory is not supposed to be practical but authentic, describing and explaining the present economic and social reality in the most accurate way, having a general character, i.e. be adequate in relation to a large area of things and phenomena, as well as have a lasting character, not a passing one. "Practicality" of a theory in management sciences may only be accepted as an ability to transpose it into directives for practical action.

It is said that a characteristic feature of management sciences is the fact that they do not have a scientific paradigm which has been hitherto widely accepted in scientific circles or several paradigms at their disposal which would determine a dominant scientific approach in the discipline and which would unite all currents, trends and schools occurring in them. It is upsetting to many researchers and is a source of doubt or scepticism about the future of management sciences.

P. Płoszajski<sup>30</sup> and Ł. Sułkowski<sup>31</sup> are probably right in saying that management sciences are at a pre-paradigm stage of development<sup>32</sup>. P. Płoszajski also calls this phase an empirical, gathering stage as opposed to the theoretical, explanatory stage, when management sciences become better developed and then have well-established theories at their disposal.

When discussing questions concerning paradigms in management sciences one cannot ignore the opinions according to which such paradigms do exist but they are undergoing an evolution appropriately to the changes in the business environment and in organisations themselves<sup>33</sup>.

Although so far such rudimentary statements have not been clearly articulated by management sciences researchers, and neither have methodological conclusions which could be accepted as paradigms, I do not think that one cannot find in literature some formulations which could become "canons", basic rules of management,

<sup>29</sup> One can have the same attitude towards the idea of "unity of theory and practice" in relation to management sciences.

<sup>30</sup> P. Płoszajski, *Między refleksją a działaniem. Dylematy praktycznej teorii zarządzania*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1985, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Ł. Sułkowski, op.cit., pp. 52–53.

<sup>32</sup> A. Szpaderski suggests in his erudite article to use the term "prescientific" instead of the term "pre-paradigm" (A. Szpaderski, *Postulat prakseologii jako teorii podstawowej dla nauk organizacji i zarządzania. Przykłady zastosowań*, "Organizacja i Kierowanie" 2006, No 2).

<sup>33</sup> On the same subject see e.g. T. Clarke, S. Clegg, *Changing Paradigms. The Transformation of Management Knowledge for the 21st Century*, Harper Collins Business, London 1998, chapter I.

and with time to pretend to the role of paradigms. Below we present several examples of such formulations:

- Activity of an organisation (e.g. a company) cannot be considered without taking its relations with the surrounding environment into account for they have a big influence on whether it is successful or not.
- The basic condition for an organisation to survive in turbulent circumstances is its flexible adaptation to them.
- The older an organisation is, the more formalised is its behaviour and the less flexible it is.
- Between the rules of centralisation and decentralisation there should be observed a rule of compromise: decisions concerning development and strategy ought to be tied to the highest level of management, and operative decisions ought to be dealt with at lower levels – it is required by organisation balance.
- In every organisation a rule of optimal span and extent of management should be observed.
- An organisation cannot function properly without an effective system of communication of various parties with the surrounding environment and within the organisation itself.
- Leadership talent and skills that managers possess influence the success or lack of it in an organisation to a large extent.
- One factor that has a large influence on the effectiveness of an organisation is culture, and in the time of common globalisation it is essential that rules of multicultural management are observed.

It needs to be noted, however, that an opinion questioning the sense of searching for a paradigm in the science of organisation and management does exist<sup>34</sup>.

Certain authors<sup>35</sup> point out rightly that social sciences, including management sciences, cannot rely, like exact and natural sciences, on stable “natural laws” (although these change too)<sup>36</sup>, which means that the “laws” of the former are to a larger extent limited in time and space. Searching for “eternal truths” in management sciences is a utopia<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> See G. Jokieli, *op.cit.*, pp. 61–62.

<sup>35</sup> P.F. Drucker, *Mysli przewodnie Druckera*, MT Biznes, Warszawa 2002, p. 112, L. Krzyżanowski, *O podstawach kierowania organizacjami inaczej....* WN PWN, Warszawa 1999, p. 103., A.K. Koźmiński, *Zarządzanie w warunkach niepewności*, WN PWN, Warszawa 2004, p. 10; Ł. Sułkowski, *op.cit.*, especially subsection 1.9, K. Zimmewicz, *Kilka refleksji na temat hipotez w naukach o zarządzaniu*, in: *Podstawy metodologiczne prac doktorskich w naukach ekonomicznych*, *op.cit.* pp. 159–160.

<sup>36</sup> A. Grobler, speaking generally about theories in science, claims that one normally thinks of “formations evolving in time, whose formulations are historically unstable, susceptible to verification and modifications” – A. Grobler, *op.cit.*, p.187.

<sup>37</sup> Representatives of natural sciences, the Americans A. Sokal and J. Bricmont state aptly that social sciences should not blindly imitate natural sciences. They should draw an inspiration from what is best in the

In order to improve the position of management sciences some of their exponents postulate:

- that one basic and coherent theory of those sciences should be formulated
- that one basic research method for management sciences should be established

They believe that fulfilment of those stipulations will lead to an integration of the present approaches, currents, trends and management schools.

It is an extraordinarily complex problem. On the one hand, statements which result from research confirmed by other scientists are considered as scientific. English physicist J. Ziman writes: "facts and scientific theories must go through a period of evaluative examinations and tests conducted by other competent people and have to turn out to be convincing enough to gain a nearly unanimous acceptance"... science "works for as broad a unanimity of rational beliefs as possible"<sup>38</sup>.

On the other hand, however, in every scientific field, even in the oldest and the firmest ones, there are many coincident theories explaining certain problems and very often they are completely, or at least to a large extent, contradictory. Motivation theories are an excellent example here. It is also pointed out that very complex phenomena are impossible to be explained within one theory<sup>39</sup>. Besides, scientific theories evolve and sometimes they even become rejected. Over time some scientific statements and theories are replaced by others<sup>40</sup>. That is why philosophers say that man cannot discover the full truth, they can only pursue it and get closer to it. The following statement seems to be close to reality: reaching general agreement is usually preceded by a period of quite a boisterous confrontation of scientific positions<sup>41</sup>. This seems to particularly concern all the social sciences, including management sciences. Let me quote P.F. Drucker's opinion on that matter: "... very quickly we come to the conviction that one theory of organisation and its one perfect structure need to be created"<sup>42</sup>.

Also, diversity of research methods is nothing negative. Quite the contrary, it is a resource that every field of study should value and develop even further. It is un-

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methodological principles of those sciences (A. Sokal i J. Bricmont, *Modne bzdury. O nadużywaniu pojęć z zakresu nauk ścisłych przez postmodernistycznych intelektualistów*, Prószyński i S-ka, pp. 180–181).

<sup>38</sup> J. Ziman, *Spółczesność nauki*, PIW, Warszawa 1968, p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> See M.J. Hatch, *Teoria organizacji*, WN PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Let me quote a typical statement by R.G.A. Dolby: "...although on every occasion science eliminates old mistakes, increases precision and scope of knowledge, it also undergoes revolutions now and again as a result of which seemingly unshakable dogmas are overthrown" (*Niepewność wiedzy. Obraz nauki w końcu XX wieku*, Amber, Warszawa 1998, p. 5). Further on the author points out that new theories, being incomplete, are easy to overthrow and therefore perhaps they should not be refuted right from the start (p. 231).

<sup>41</sup> Let me quote the great German philosopher M. Heidegger: "Sciences endeavour to gradually eliminate contradictions which always occur in theories and in observed facts" (M. Heidegger, *Zasada racji*, Wydawnictwo Baran i Suszczyński, Kraków 2001, p. 29).

<sup>42</sup> P.F. Drucker, *W kierunku organizacji nowego typu, w: Organizacja przyszłości*, Business Press, Warszawa 1998, p. 21.

derstandable that in the first stage of its development, or during its youth years, every scientific field of study borrows research methods from the older, fully developed ones. Over a period of time it creates its own, original methods of scientific enquiry. Depending on the kind of scientific problem different research methods are used, those created within the discipline's own domain as well as those taken from other disciplines and adapted to fit the "peculiarity" of management sciences. Such a state, defined as pluralism of research methods, is something completely normal. The stipulation that every science should use only its own methods is groundless and unreal. It is a utopia.

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## Abstract

The paper is focused on basic cognitive problems of management science. Methodological pluralism is the main approach, but creation of one single paradigm of management in the future is not excluded.

**KEY WORDS: MANAGEMENT PARADIGMS, MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY**